REMARKS

In the Final Action dated August 12, 2003, claims 1-5, 8-15 and 23-32 are pending. Claims 23-29 are withdrawn from consideration as drawn to non-elected subject matter. Claims 1-3, 5, 8, 9 and 11-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as allegedly lacking enabling support. Claims 4, 10, 15 and 30-32 are objected to as dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The drawings sheets for Figures 1 and 3 are objected to for reasons indicated on the PTO-948 form.

This Response addresses each of the Examiner's objections and rejections. Applicants therefore respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance or at least in better condition for appeal. Favorable consideration of all pending claims is therefore respectfully requested.

Applicants have canceled claims 23-29 without prejudice by way of the instant amendment. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of these claims in a divisional application.

Claims 1-3, 5, 8, 9 and 11-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as allegedly lacking enabling support.

The Examiner maintains that the specification does not provide enablement for a method as presently claimed where pancreatic cells are cultured in the absence of laminin-1. Specifically, the Examiner points out that Jiang et al. (J. Cell Sci. 115: 753-760, 2002) teach that the BMPs tested therein did not facilitate formation of colonies of pancreatic cells in the absence of laminin-1. Therefore, the Examiner contends that one skilled in the art would therefore have

to engage in undue experimentation to identify a BMP or other culture conditions that would stimulate growth and differentiation of mammalian pancreatic epithelial cells so as to form colonies in the absence of laminin-1.

The Examiner indicates, however, that claims 4, 10, 15 and 30-32 are objected to as dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In response, Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 5 and 12 to incorporate the delineations of claims 30-32, respectively, to specify that the pancreatic epithelial cells are cultured in the presence of both BMP and at least one of laminin-1 or laminin-1-containing extracellular matrix ECM. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims, as presently amended, are fully enabled by the specification. As such, the rejection of 1-3, 5, 8, 9 and 11-14 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, is overcome. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

Applicants also provide herewith substitute drawings of Figures 1 and 3.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the present application is in condition for allowance which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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Enclosure: Formal Drawings (Figs. 1 and 3)